

Cheltenham Cyclist

Autumn 2003

Postmen Bullied into wearing helmets

From the 1st October 2003 all Cheltenham postmen, who use a bicycle whilst delivering mail, have been instructed to wear a cycle helmet whilst on their rounds. A straw poll recently discovered that over 80% of those asked did not want to wear a cycle helmet as they felt it would be an inconvenience to doing their job with little practical benefit. Having found no support from their Union, local Postmen were put in touch with John Franklin author of the well respected book "Cycle Craft" and a Cheltenham Cycle Campaign member to see if he or the cycle campaign can help. John is also an acknowledged expert on the effects of helmet use on cycling.

Each year around 2,000 postal cyclists are injured, mostly as a result of slips and falls. Only a quarter of the injuries are sufficiently serious to require the workers to take time off work. Just 1% of casualties suffer head injury and Royal Mail acknowledges that wearing a helmet will not necessarily prevent injury or death.

Contacts with The Health and Safety Executive have revealed that they do not recommend the compulsory imposition of the wearing of helmets as it is not required by road traffic law and could infringe the individuals human rights. The imposition of the helmet rule also looks like a considerable over-reaction to the death, in 2001, of a cycling postman in Gloucester, as it would appear that there is no evidence to show that a helmet would have prevented his fatal injuries. Since the 1985 when very few cyclists wore helmets to now when approximately 25% of cyclist wear a helmet there has been no discernable effect on the number or severity of head injuries. In Alberta where a law was introduced compelling all under 18 to wear a helmet, whilst cycling, the proportion of head injuries has doubled from 5% to 10%. It is thought that this may be due to what is known as risk compensa-

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tion by the young cyclist. That is they feel safer wearing a helmet so take more risks. But this risk compensation may also extend to the drivers and riders of motor vehicles, who see the cyclist wearing protection and so also take more risks, by going too close to the cyclist, turn across them, and/or pass the cyclist at greater speed causing them to be thrown from their bicycle.

What is very clear from research is that the health benefit of cycling far outweighs the associated risks. A person who cycles a moderate amount may be as fit as someone ten years younger and as a result has a longer life expectancy. Whereas the chances of having a serious accident whilst cycling appear to be about 1 chance in 3500 years.

The current evidence based on independent surveys is controversial but appears to show that the wearing of helmets has little if any effect on total numbers of head injuries as a proportion of cyclist miles travelled. It has, however, been shown that the introduction of mandatory helmet use results in a large reduction in the number of cyclists, with a consequential effect on health.

The view from Cheltenham Cycle Campaign is that we are neither for or against the wearing of helmets. It should be the choice of the individual based on the known facts as they affect him or her.

For More information on the helmet debate see <http://www.cyclehelmets.org>

AGM

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Cheltenham Cycle Campaign will take place on Wednesday 5th November 2003 at 7.30 p.m. in Room TC108 The University of Gloucestershire Francis Close Hall Campus, Saint Paul's Road, Cheltenham.

All members are invited to attend.

Provisional Agenda

- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of 2002 AGM
- Matters Arising
- Treasurers Report
- Secretaries Report
- Election of Officers
- Election of committee members
- Meetings for input from members
- Cycle rides—should we run family oriented rides
- Any Other Business



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CTC/CCN Spring Conference in London

André Curtis and John Mallows of CCC attended the spring conference of the Cycle Campaign Network (CCN) and the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC). It was hosted by the London Cycle Campaign on 10th May in the auspicious surroundings of Church House close by Westminster Abbey. Crispin Truman, Chair of LCC the speakers who included Rose Ades who heads Transport for London's Cycling Centre of Excellence. Many ambitious cycling provisions are planned for the city, which, encouragingly, entail removing barriers to cycling, and giving people the confidence to cycle rather than just concentrating on piecemeal facilities. The aim is to give cyclists an edge over other traffic and to achieve a three fold increase by 2010. A planned expenditure of £29 million will transform London's cycling profile over the next five years.

Olly Hatch, with a long career as a promoter of cycling, is a member of the National Cycling Strategy Board and a director of the Velocity international cycling conferences. Olly gave an encouraging description of key features of Continental cycling – 'all other countries with more than 80% of the population urban based have made good progress so with 89.5%, the UK has no excuses' he told the delegates.

Christian Wolmar, a journalist specialising in transport, who cycles as his primary method of transport and is a member of the NCS Board, took up many interesting themes, including the need to promote cycling as a perfectly

normal and acceptable activity – this is quickly becoming a main plank of the campaigning platform

Anna Trafford, LLC's map expert, has produced an excellent series of cycling maps funded by TfL. Andre and John were encouraged that the CCC's new map, currently with the Borough Council for funding, has a similar approach of grading roads, routes and provisions rather than just showing dedicated cycling facilities.

The highlight was a stirring and frank speech from Ken Livingstone, white jacket draped casually over his shoulders, in which he admitted to his trepidations on the eve of his congestion charging, but he is clearly pleased with the results. He is instrumental in the funding of cycling developments and provisions and will be ensuring that individual boroughs are held accountable for the proper spending of these funds. It seems Ken is acutely aware of the effect speed has on congestion, chaos and casualties, so don't be surprised if he introduces tighter speed restrictions in London.

Most delegates left the conference thinking if London, with its size and complexities, can fund such an ambitious strategy, why can't our local authorities do it on a smaller scale.

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Web sites worth visiting

www.whycycle.co.uk This is a really good web site which not only answers its own question, but many, many more also. It is a site for both the experienced and novice cyclist. On this site you will find information on:

- Styles of bikes
- Buying your bike
- Bike sizing advice
- Cycling with children
- Safety and security
- Getting there
- Bike jargon buster

This site is especially useful for those who are daunted by the bewildering choice of bikes available and want help on deciding what type of bike best suits their needs. For anyone who wants to get back into cycling or take it up for the first time, this site could make the whole process much easier.

www.cyclecheltenham.org.uk

The web site of the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign.

In addition to our web site we also have a contact group on yahoo, which we intend to make more use of in the future, for contacting our members, but, you have to sign on to the group to be included. To become a member of the group go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cyclecheltenham/> and follow the instructions for joining the group.

Fed up with Pot Holes



As first reported in the Summer edition of Cheltenham Cyclist, the Council Officers would like your help in reporting potholes in the road. As they are unable to get around all the roads on a regular basis **they rely on the public reporting faults in the road.** The details required are the name of the road and the exact location of the fault, if you can relate it to a nearby house number this narrows down the area. You should also indicate the nature of the fault, pothole, collapsed drain, broken manhole cover etc. You should send your report to Stephen Burden, Network Maintenance Manager, Central Depot, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GL51 9JZ. . Telephone 01242 774 545 or email: Streetcare@cheltenham.gov.uk If the fault is not in Cheltenham Borough then go to http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/adobe_acrobat/Agents%20Areas.pdf to find out where you should report the fault. We are also asking members to copy any reports to the cycle campaign you can do this by emailing editor@cyclecheltenham.org.uk or post to 42 Long Mynd Avenue Cheltenham GL51 3QN, so that we may follow up on defects. We would also like members to let us know what cycle provision you would like to see in your area, come along to the AGM and let us know.



Cycling review of the Central Severn Vale

The County Council has commissioned the Halcrow Group to undertake a review of the Central Severn Vale. There are promising indications that Halcrow recognises the need for coherent routes and a review of speed limits. However Halcrow is not held in great esteem by cycling groups across the country. They have, for example, been responsible for cycle lanes narrower than handlebars, under the mistaken belief that any provision is better than none and there are worrying indications that their CSV report will only consider a route a cycling route if it comprises a string of cycling facilities. This is the discredited approach which brought about the awful cycling provision on the St James/ Waitrose development. So it is promising that CCC's recent contacts with Halcrow indicate that their awareness is improving. However, CCC might well have

to make robust but constructive criticism of the CSV report when it's published.

Ken Kifer

Ken Kifer well known in North America for his cycling advocacy and across the world for his excellent cycling web site was killed when knocked off his bike by a drunk driver. The driver had been released from jail just four hours earlier following another drunk in charge incident.

The state governor's and district attorney's offices were inundated with calls from angry cyclists across the world. The charge against the driver has been raised to murder.

McDonalds unsafe for bikes

A pensioner was turned away from a Norwich McDonald's drive-thru because he arrived on a bike, despite the fact that an off-road cycle path runs right through the premises. His order was refused as a matter of policy because, as a spokesman said, "Our primary concern is for the safety and welfare of customers. The thought of people riding bikes with a drink in one hand and a meal in the other should explain why it may not be safe. We do have a sit-down restaurant cyclists are welcome to use, but the drive-thru is only for cars."


It was not explained why car drivers are considered safe driving off with a drink in one hand and meal in the other.

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CCN/CTC Cycle Planning Conferences

The Autumn CCN/CTC cycle Planning Conference is being hosted by Pedal Pushers, the Sheffield cycle campaign. It will take place on Saturday 18th October 2003 at the Earth Centre in Conisbrough, which is 10 Miles NE of Sheffield and 5 miles SW of Doncaster. Conisbrough station is adjacent to the venue.

Cost of the conference is £18 which includes an organic food lunch. A booking form may be downloaded from <http://www.cyclenetwork.org.uk> or contact Cherry Allan at CTC Tel: 01483 520735.

Spring Conference 2004 The Spring 2004 conference is to take place in Dublin, courtesy of the Dublin Cycle Campaign. This will be the first time that the conference has been held outside Great Britain.

Bells on Bikes

New regulations have come into force "The Pedal Bicycles (Safety) Regulations 2003".

These regulations (law) stipulate that bells must be fitted on all new bikes, but there will be no requirement for the owner to have a bell when the bike is in use.

Lights on Bikes

It's that time of year again when the traditional wail goes up, "I saw a dozen cyclists riding

without lights on my way home." No mention ever of the number (unobserved?) with lights. However, after lighting-up time cyclists are required to have a red rear reflector. A constant, i.e. not flashing red light to the rear and a, constant, white light to the front. The lights should also have the approvals number (a BS number) embossed in the lens if you wish to be completely legal. So why not dig the lights out and give them a try before you need them.

Dates for Your Diary

Saturday 18th. October 2003 CCN/CTC Conference (see above for details)

Wednesday 5th November 7.30 p.m. Cycle Campaign Annual General Meeting

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month (except August). They are held at the University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall campus, St Paul's Road. starting promptly at 19.30Hrs. Usually in room TC 108.

Provisional dates for
Bike Week 2004 are
12th-20th June.



Cheltenham Cycles

OPEN : TUESDAY- SATURDAY 9am-6pm
61, Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2NE
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New Shire Hall appointments

Following last year's appointment of Colin Knight, ex York Council and with a wealth of cycling experience, as Transport Planning Manager at Shire Hall, there have been three further appointments which should help cycling. Emma Shibli is the new Cycling and Walking Officer, Richard Gillingham has the job of helping businesses to compile and implement travel plans and Anthony Meehan has a similar role for the County's schools.

Demise of Health and Transport Forum

The County's Health and Transport forum, instigated after a successful conference at the University three years ago, has been a casualty of local health service re-organisation. Cheltenham Cycle Campaign played an active role in the forum, raising issues such as , rather ironically, health sector re-organisations and developments being made with no heed to travel patterns of employees or patients. However all is not lost and the work of the forum is being taken up by the County's Strategic partnership, which CCC intends to join. (See item on Town Centre Cycling for explanation of Strategic Partnerships)

National Cycling Strategy Officer for the South West

Doug Fremlin, the South West's member of the National Cycling Strategy's regional development team, operates from Plymouth but has already made several trips to Cheltenham & Gloucester to learn of local issues and to meet officers and activists. Cheltenham Cycling Campaign is looking forward to working closely with Doug who has already requested copies of our reports and recommendations including those on the controversial Waitrose development.

Town Centre Cycling

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign's patient lobbying for much improved cross town cycling routes seems to be bearing fruit. The need has arisen following the extensive pedestrianisation, which we support in principle, but which causes significant detours for some and intimidation by traffic on the inner ring road.

In the next stage of pedestrianisation the Council intends to try a more relaxed approach to cycling through the town centre. This works well on the continent, but culture here is different and, like the Council, we are keeping our fingers crossed that his will prove successful.

CCC will join in the condemnation of cyclists who misuse the routes across the town centre. These welcome developments, however, will not prevent us from continuing to lobby for cycle friendly road based routes around and about the town centre.





Join Cheltenham Cycle Campaign

You can make a difference by joining Cheltenham Cycle Campaign. We aim to improve conditions for cyclists, and to make the Cycle Campaign a more effective organisation. The more supporters we have the better. Individuals and families can join and local organisations are welcome to affiliate as associate members.

Name: _____

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Annual Membership £3 Individual £5 Family
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I enclose £ _____ for Individual/Family/Associate* membership and a donation of £ _____
Please send cheques to our Treasurer: Mr A Halls, 14 Durham Close, Warden Hill, Cheltenham, GL51 5DF

I hereby give permission to the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign to hold the above details in its records.

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If Joining as a family please list other family members.

* Delete as appropriate

Publications **Transport in Tomorrows Countryside**

Published by The Countryside Agency.

Puts forward ten principles for transport based on a vision of sustainable development, requiring social, economic and environmental objectives to be persued together. 0870 120 6466 countryside@twoten.press.net

Free To Travel Published by The Conservative Party.

Fails to mention walking, cycling or the 28% of households without cars. Pro-car, pro-road and pro-speed. A green light to unhealthy car-dependence and parking pressure.

From CTC Cycle Digest



Editor : David Breeze. Email: editor@cyclecheltenham.org.uk
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The federation of cycle campaign groups